

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 12595 311311Z

43

ACTION SS-25

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P R 311225Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4967

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T TEHRAN 12595

EXDIS

KUWAIT PLEASE PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, SY, LE

SUBJ: THE SHAH AND THE LEBANESE SITUATION

1. AT AUDIENCE ON DECEMBER 30 SHAH ADVERTED BRIEFLY TO THE SITUATION IN LEBANON IN THE CONTEXT OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD'S VISIT TO TEHRAN. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT LEBANON HAS AGREED TO THE CONVENING OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE HE PROPOSED (TEHRAN 12149 AND FOLLOWING).

2. THE SHAH IS QUITE CLEARLY RECEIVING CONFLICTING REPORTS ABOUT THE ACTUAL SITUATION IN LEBANON. LEBANESE AMBASSADOR AL-KHALIL TOLD ME DECEMBER 29 THAT HE HAD SPENT AN HOUR WITH THE SHAH THE DAY BEFORE GOING OVER IN DETAIL HIS VIEWS ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN HIS COUNTRY. HE COMMENTED THAT THE SHAH'S AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT WAS REPORTING DIFFERENTLY AND THAT THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN BEIRUT HAD STILL ANOTHER EMPHASIS. AL-KHALIL'S CONTENTION WAS BORNE OUT BY THE RATHER CONFUSED PRESENTATION THE SHAH MADE TO ME. BUT WHATEVER THE SITUATION MAY IN FACT BE, THE SHAH IS CONVINCED THAT THE ACTION IN BEIRUT IS COMMUNIST INSPIRED AND THAT THE IRAQIS ARE DOING A LOT OF "DIRTY BUSINESS"

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SECRET

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 12595 311311Z

THERE. THE SHAH STATED THAT HE HAD ENCOURAGED PRESIDENT

ASAD DURING THEIR TALK THE DAY BEFORE TO "BE FIRMER" AND "TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS" TO BRING PEACE TO LEBANON. (MY TRANSLATION OF WHAT THE SHAH MEANS BY "FIRMER" IS THAT HE WANTS ASAD TO CRACK DOWN ON COMMUNIST AND/OR IRAQI ELEMENTS. SINCE ONE OF THE SHAH'S NIGHTMARES IS A JOINING UP OF SYRIA AND IRAQ IN A "RED CRESCENT", HE SELDOM MISSES AN OPPORTUNITY TO POUR VINEGAR INTO ANY POTION THE SYRIANS AND IRAQIS MAY BE CONCOCTING BETWEEN THEMSELVES.)

2. THE SHAH IS UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO HELP THE CHRISTIANS AS WELL AS THE SHI'ITES IN LEBANON. HIS CURRENT ATTITUDE IS THAT HE HAS NO MONEY TO HELP ANY FACTION NOW. HE CONTENTS THAT IF ASAD'S EFFORTS IN LEBANON FAIL, THEN THE WAR WILL DEFINITELY DETERIORATE INTO COMMUNISTS VERSUS NON-COMMUNISTS. EVEN IN THIS EVENTUALITY HE DOES NOT PLAN MILITARY OR FINANCIAL HELP EVEN THOUGH HE IS PERSUADED THAT LEBANON, LIKE ANGOLA, IS EVIDENCE OF SOVIET MACHINATIONS ACCORDING TO THEIR CONCEPT OF WARS OF LIBERATION. HE BELIEVES THAT WE WILL BE SEEING MORE SOVIET PROBES AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE. THE SHAH WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE CLEAR STATEMENT FROM MOSCOW RECENTLY THAT DETENTE WOULD IN NO WAY STAY THE SOVIET HAND IN SUPPORT OF WARS OF LIBERATION. AND HE ADDS, "UNTIL THE SOVIET UNION PUBLICLY AND OFFICIALLY DISAVOWS ITS INTENTION TO SPREAD MARXISM-LENINISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL PURSUE ITS OBJECTIVES ON A CONTINUING BASIS WITH EVERY FORCE AT ITS COMMAND."
HELMS

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